

## Racial Justice News Items

### October 2020

Cory Whitfield is a member:

[Improving racial, social justice in East Tennessee](#)

[East Tennessean](#)

**Cory Whitfield, an ETSU graduate student, was recently elected to serve as a student representative for the Tennessee chapter of the National Association of Social Workers Board of Directors.** Whitfield will be working with other social workers to promote racial and social justice in Tennessee. The organization also works to promote the social work profession in the region. Whitfield also completed his undergraduate degree in social work at ETSU.

Widian Nicola is a member, and president-elect of NASW-NJ:

[Opinion: Sterilizing immigrant detainees must stop now](#)

[NJ.com](#)

**Widian Nicola, D.S.W., LCSW:** Reports are emerging that women in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement [are being sterilized en masse](#). These women came to the United States as refugees seeking asylum from horror, brutality, and oppression. Asking shelter from poverty and violence and a future for themselves and their children, they are instead incarcerated in for-profit detention centers and surgically stripped of their ability to have children — **a brutality and oppression that is both heartbreaking and unspeakable but must be spoken as it must now stop.**

Allan Barsky is a member:

[Ethics Alive! Elections in Light of Social Work Values](#)

[The New Social Worker](#)

Together, these standards suggest not only that social workers should vote for candidates who support social justice, but that **they should also support candidates and groups who promote each of these elements of social justice.** The code does not dictate which party or which individuals to support. As social workers, we need to use our own analysis, critical thinking, and decision-making to determine whom to support and how.

Donyel Byrd is a member:

[Activists want to defund police departments. What could that look like in Bloomington?](#)

[IDS News](#)

**Donyel Byrd, a Bloomington social worker,** mentioned the same issue with getting people to call a non-911 number. She suggested training 911 dispatchers in alternative crisis response so police are not sent out to calls that don't require a police presence. This would include situations such as a drug emergency where an ambulance alone is more appropriate.

Erica Woodland is a member:

[People of color create their own mental health services online](#)

CNN

“There’s a long history of building out ecosystems of care in our communities,” said **Erica Woodland, the founder and executive director of the [National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network](#)**. That makes sense: Racial and ethnic minorities, [studies](#) have shown, respond well to mental health professionals who are culturally relevant and understanding of their experiences.

[How Employee Assistance Programs Can Help Your Whole Company Address Racism at Work](#)

Harvard Business Review

As a professor and chair of the only Masters in Social Work (MSW) program with a focus on **preparing graduates for careers in the field of Employee Assistance**, I have received numerous calls over the past several months from employers asking for advice and consultation regarding how they can work to challenge — and dismantle — their own systems that uphold racist views and policies.

Patricia McIntosh is a member:

[Hartford civilian crisis response team to be lead by former Connecticut Children’s social worker](#)

The Hartford Courant

A longtime social worker will oversee the creation of a new civilian crisis response team in Hartford, an effort Mayor Luke Bronin announced in June amid calls to defund the police. **Patricia A. McIntosh left Connecticut Children’s to manage the project**, which will ultimately dispatch professional crisis workers to certain emergency calls instead of or alongside police officers. The mayor’s office announced her hire Tuesday when it released the names of local health experts who will serve on an advisory board for the new team.

Sam Hickman is executive director of NASW-WV:

[\[Audio\] WV Support for Mental-Health Alternatives in 9-1-1 Calls](#)

Public News Service

**Sam Hickman, executive director at the National Association of Social Workers in West Virginia**, said some police responses escalate into violence when calls involve mental illness, emotional distress or addiction, because police are being asked to resolve situations for which they're often not trained. "The police can't be expected to intervene in every single problem in society. They should be asked to intervene and to keep us safe when there are people that we're really afraid of," Hickman said. "Their skills don't broadly include everything that we're asking them to do; they need support from other professionals to do that."

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